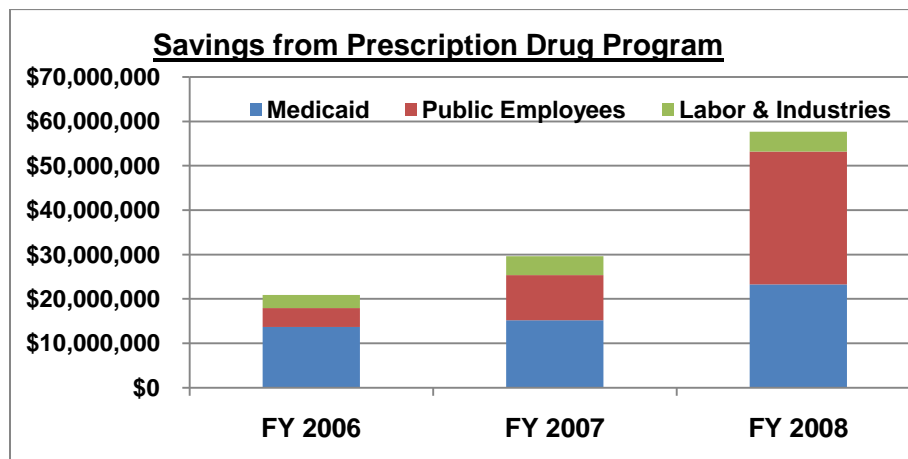


Washington State Health Care Comparative Effectiveness Initiatives

Washington State has sponsored many initiatives that rely on scientific evidence to improve quality of care, reduce unnecessary care and improve the value of health care services:

- **Administrative Simplification.** For several years, a work group comprised of providers, carriers and public payers have been working to reduce health care administrative costs in Washington State. The need for such an effort was reinforced with the Insurance Commissioner's 2008 [study](#)¹ showing that between 30-40% of every health care dollar is spent on administration costs. In 2009, the Legislature passed [SB 5346](#)² formalizing the work group and requiring the development of uniform standards for:
 - Professional credentialing, including a single, electronic process for documenting provider education, degrees, licensure, etc.
 - Electronic eligibility and coverage verification, enabling providers and payers to go to a single source to obtain information about a patient's health insurance, covered benefits and cost-sharing;
 - Processing health care claims by employing national standards for "code edits" and increasing the transparency of payers' claims processes; and
 - Utilization management by standardizing medical management processes, including web-based procedures and forms, for authorizing services.
- **Statewide Prescription Drug Program.** Several state agencies participate in this program that uses unbiased evidence reports and an independent, clinical committee to determine the most effective drugs. So far, the state's top 28 drug classes have been reviewed, saving an estimated \$55 million in 2008 alone. The chart shows savings for each participating public program.



- **WPDP Discount Card Program.** This program extends the state's prescription drugs savings to people without adequate coverage. Participants can save up to 60% on generic drugs and 20% on brand name drugs. Through April, 2009, over 110,000 Washingtonians have signed up for the card and saved over \$7.5 million.

¹ See <http://www.insurance.wa.gov/legislative/reports/SimplificationRpt.pdf>

² See <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5346>

- **Health Technology Assessment Program**³. This first-in-the-nation public program established a clinical committee that is insulated from the political process to determine which medical treatments are safe, effective and provide good value to patients. In two years, the program has conducted empirical reviews of ten treatments, including five listed by Consumer Report list of ten most overused treatments, including back surgery, coronary stents, whole-body screens, high-tech angiography, and virtual colonoscopy. The program has saved the state **\$21 million** in unnecessary and potentially harmful care. Annualized savings exceed **\$27 million**.
- **Diagnostic Imaging.** Under this new initiative, by July 1, 2009, state agencies must identify evidence-based best practice guidelines/protocols and decision support tools for advanced diagnostic imaging services. State agencies are expected to implement these requirements by September, 2009 and explore the feasibility of adoption by all payers by July, 2010.
- **Patient Decision Aids.** Washington has a unique Patient Decision Aid/Shared Decision making pilot to promote better informed patient decisions for "preference-sensitive" treatment. These aids provide patients with information on procedures, including the pros and cons of receiving treatment. Educating patients on their options reduces unnecessary procedures and variation in care. The same legislation also provided greater legal protection to physicians by allowing decision aids to qualify as informed consent. The pilot is employing 13 patient decision aids for elective surgical procedures and screenings.
- **For more information, please contact Senior Policy Analyst David Hanig at hanig.david@leg.wa.gov.**

³ See <http://www.hta.hca.wa.gov/>